

A Study of Emergency Management at the Local Program Level

FINAL DRAFT
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Presented to the
Washington State Emergency Management Council

By the
Task Force on Local Programs

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Acknowledgments

The Task Force thanks the numerous emergency management professionals and volunteers working in Washington State. We also thank all of those who contributed to this study. You are our critical first line of defense and recovery from emergencies and disasters, both natural and human-caused. It is our intention that the recommendations in this report will be used to improve the statewide system of emergency management by increasing awareness and appreciation of—and support for—the local emergency management programs that protect our state and its citizens.

We extend our gratitude to the Washington State Emergency Management Council (EMC), without which we would have never realized this opportunity to study and contribute to the enhancement of emergency management in Washington.

We also acknowledge the significant efforts of both the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) and the Association of Washington Cities (AWC). The combined project team, Nicole Simpkinson of WSAC and Sharon Fasnacht and Andy Clarke of AWC, developed and compiled the findings contained in this report, and facilitated all of the Task Force's efforts.

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The Washington State Emergency Management Council's Task Force on Local Programs Charter

The following is excerpted from the Washington State Emergency Management Council's charter establishing the Task Force on Local Programs.

PURPOSE

Perform a strategic assessment of the ability of local and tribal emergency management organizations to effectively provide for all phases of comprehensive emergency management.

BACKGROUND

The Emergency Management Council (EMC) is charged by state law to "advise the Governor and Director on all matters pertaining to state and local emergency management". The law also directs the EMC to "ensure that the Governor receives an annual assessment of statewide emergency preparedness."

The EMC has determined that the events of September 11, 2001, and the ensuing focus on overall preparedness, make it prudent that Washington State's system of emergency management be evaluated to determine its overall capacity to meet its newly defined "all hazards" responsibility.

The EMC Task Force on Local Program Assessment is hereby formed to specifically look at the local and tribally governed components of Washington's emergency management system. Counter-Terrorism and Homeland Security planning have placed significant new requirements on these "local" agencies and entities, and further, has led to the organization of ad-hoc regional planning entities to respond more effectively to intense federal grant opportunities and requirements.

The EMC believes that local ability to respond effectively to any emergency is central to the system of emergency management and, therefore, establishes said Task Force to accomplish the outlined purpose.

OBJECTIVES

To serve as the EMC's project-specific working group in the discharge of the above purpose, with the following specific objectives:

- (1) Evaluate local and tribal emergency management requirements, capabilities and needs. An implied responsibility of the Task Force is to evaluate the role and effectiveness of state-level emergency management to the extent that local and tribal emergency management is impacted by state policy, regulation and/or operations.

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- (2) Evaluate the ability of local and tribal emergency management organizations to provide for the four phases of emergency management (mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery).
 - (3) Evaluate the effectiveness of the emergency management structure at the local and Tribal levels, including the emergence of regional emergency management efforts.
 - (4) Accomplish the strategic assessment based on existing laws, regulations, rules and standards while utilizing developed assessment tools.
 - (5) Provide assessment findings and make recommendations that will increase the ability of local and tribal emergency management organizations to meet current and future risks.

TASK FORCE ORGANIZATION

Organizations represented on the Task Force will be requested to name a member and alternate.

Membership

County Commissioner/Executive	Task Force Co-Chair (from EMC)
Mayor	Task Force Co-Chair (from EMC)
Sheriff	Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs
Police Chief	Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs
Local Emergency Management Directors (2)	State Emergency Management Association
Local Health Department/District Directors (2)	State Health Department Association
Fire Chief	Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs
Tribal Representative	
City Manager	
County Administrator	
Staff Member	Association of Washington Cities
Staff Member	Washington State Association of Counties
Staff Member	Washington State Emergency Management Division (Ex-Officio)
Staff Member	Washington State Health Department (Ex-Officio)
Staff Member	Washington State Patrol – Fire Protection Bureau (Ex-Officio)
Chair	Washington State Emergency Management Council (Ex-Officio)

PROTOCOL

Task Force findings and recommendations will be submitted to the EMC for consideration. The EMC can adopt and/or approve the report and forward with or without additional comment to the Adjutant General and the Governor for further consideration, or it could request additional effort on the part of the Task Force prior to final consideration.

Adopted by the Washington State Emergency Management Council, January 9, 2003.

Executive Summary

The local ability to respond effectively to any emergency is central to the [broader] system of emergency management in Washington State.

—Washington State Emergency Management Council

All disasters are local disasters. Local jurisdictions—county and city—and tribes are therefore our first line of defense and recovery from both natural disasters and human-caused chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive accidents or terrorist acts.

Local jurisdictions—county and city—and tribes are our first line of defense and recovery from both natural and human-caused emergencies and disasters.

Washington is recognized across the nation for the strength of its emergency management and disaster response, as well as for its recent efforts to prepare for terrorism and other domestic threats. In Washington, the personal dedication of individual emergency managers is sustaining current levels of capability in our local programs.

The survey findings and research results of this study demonstrate, however, that inconsistencies in the statewide system of emergency management impede local programs' abilities to ensure basic levels of disaster preparedness. Disparities in the organization, staffing and funding of local programs have led to a patchwork of capable and less-than-capable emergency management programs that compromises effective statewide disaster response.

Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Since September 11, 2001, counter-terrorism and homeland security planning have placed significant new requirements on local emergency management programs. In Washington, these new requirements are being integrated into an existing all hazards approach to emergency management. In this report, as in a growing number of local programs, "emergency management" and "all hazards" includes activities related to both counter-terrorism and homeland security.

Background

In 2003, the Washington State Emergency Management Council (EMC) created the Task Force on Local Programs to look at "the state of emergency management" in Washington's counties, cities, and tribes. The EMC has asked the Task Force to

conduct this study as part of its annual commitment to report to the Governor on statewide emergency preparedness. This study was designed to identify the strengths and the gaps in local and tribal governments' ability to mitigate, plan for, respond to, and recover from the unique combination of hazards that exist in Washington State—both natural and human-caused.

The results of this study identify the strengths of emergency management in Washington State, as well as the challenges local programs face.

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Local Program Strengths

1. Emergency management in Washington State has been strengthened by a growing trend toward professionalization in the discipline.
2. Requirements to develop or update hazard identification plans, mitigation plans and comprehensive emergency management plans, as well as the grant funding to do meet those requirements, have increased overall planning and preparedness in Washington.
3. Recent events such as the Nisqually earthquake in 2001 and recurring disasters such as wild land fires in central and eastern Washington and floods in western Washington regularly test the readiness and improve the capabilities of local and state emergency management.
4. The use of a standardized incident command system for disaster response increases collaboration as well as the consistency and effectiveness of response operations.
5. The recent focus on homeland security has fostered increased regional collaboration.
6. The integration of new homeland security responsibilities into the existing statewide emergency management structure has increased cross-discipline coordination and information sharing, and strengthened the existing all hazards model for emergency preparedness.

Local Program Challenges

1. While performance standards for emergency management are gaining broader acceptance, the absence of a single standard applied consistently across the state makes it difficult to define baseline capabilities or assess current levels of preparedness.
2. While statewide emergency management in Washington exceeds the preparedness levels of many other states, emergency management and homeland security capabilities at the local level often do not meet the basic needs of local jurisdictions.
3. While most local programs report that state and local laws are sufficient to support local emergency management and anti-terrorism efforts, a lack of procedural compliance and limited enforcement contribute to a patchwork of capable and

less-than-capable emergency management programs as well as inconsistencies in disaster preparedness.

4. Disparities in resources for local program resources have led to significant inconsistencies in statewide capability and preparedness.
5. A lack of adequate dedicated support resources available at the state level contributes to lower levels of overall local preparedness, specifically inadequate capability levels in mitigation and planning, and insufficient training and exercises, regional collaboration, and local outreach.
6. There is a lack of routine communication within and among local jurisdictions regarding emergency management requirements, roles, responsibilities, and resources.
7. A lack of consistent emergency management and homeland security education programs for local elected officials has created uncertainty among those officials concerning their statutory and operational emergency management responsibilities. Such ambiguities contribute to statewide inconsistencies in funding, resources, and prioritizing of emergency management.
8. Though increasing, the still limited collection of local public education programs has left the general public largely unaware of its role in emergency preparedness and its responsibilities when a disaster occurs.
9. Reliance on funding sources that are sometimes insufficient, inaccessible, or restricted is increasing the administrative requirements for grants management and limiting local programs' ability to effectively maintain adequate disaster preparedness.

Recommendations

Systemic change will require an ongoing state-level commitment to local programs, a stable statewide funding source, and significant outreach efforts.

The recommendations included in this study reflect the survey and research findings as well as the analysis and conclusions of the Task Force on Local Programs. They aim to create significant, long-lasting improvement in the system of emergency management in Washington State. The Task Force recognizes, however, that achieving such systemic change will require more than just the recommendations identified in this report. The Task Force believes successful implementation will require an ongoing state-level commitment to local programs, a stable statewide fund and funding source to support local disaster preparedness and mitigation, and significant outreach efforts to provide the needed training and education.

The Task Force has identified:

- Recommendations for systemic change to restructure and improve the statewide system
- Recommendations for administrative action to strengthen the statewide system
- Recommendations for legislative action
- Immediate next steps

Recommendations for Systemic Change

1. Evaluate the benefits and feasibility of aligning the boundaries of existing Emergency Medical Services Regions, Bio-Terrorism Regions, Fire Mobilization Regions, Law Enforcement Mobilization Regions, and Regional Homeland Security Coordination Districts.
2. Establish emergency management planning regions for planning, collaborating, coordinating, and sharing information among disaster preparedness and response entities.
3. Examine the potential benefits and increased efficiencies of sub-regional operational areas defined around individual county boundaries and administered through representative participation as determined by the county and the cities within it.
4. Establish designated local liaisons within the Washington State Emergency Management Division.
5. Establish a stable state fund and funding source to support emergency planning and mitigation efforts.

Recommendations for Administrative Action

6. Develop and market an ongoing training program and curriculum for local elected and appointed officials.
7. Develop adaptive performance guidelines for local emergency management programs.
8. Adopt and implement the Incident Command System (ICS) for disaster response in accordance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
9. Review existing mutual aid agreements and evaluate their ability to effectively support disaster response operations.
10. Develop and market guidelines for local emergency management directors, including essential functions, roles and responsibilities, desirable qualifications, and minimum training and performance recommendations.
11. Develop or update, and then disseminate sample documents, templates, and guides of necessary emergency management ordinances, plans, agreements, and other helpful resources.
12. Continue to increase public awareness and participation in emergency preparedness.

Recommendations for Legislative Action

13. Review state laws governing emergency management. Pursue revisions to update Washington State Administrative Code and Revised Code of Washington.
14. Pursue the necessary legislative revisions to codify organizational and other changes resulting from recommendations in this report.

Immediate Next Steps

15. Gain approval and endorsement for the recommendations included in this report from the Washington State Emergency Management Council, the Adjutant General, and the Governor's Office.
16. Continue the Task Force on Local Programs to oversee the implementation of the recommendations adopted or endorsed by the Washington State Emergency Management Council, the Adjutant General, and the Governor's Office.
17. Prioritize implementation projects and develop detailed work plans. Identify and develop necessary work groups to guide and manage implementation.
18. Report bi-monthly on progress to the Washington State Emergency Management Council.

The Task Force sincerely hopes that the findings and recommendations identified in this report are used to strengthen the statewide system of emergency management in Washington State and to improve our overall disaster preparedness.

About This Study

The local ability to respond effectively to any emergency is central to the [broader] system of emergency management in Washington State.

—Washington State Emergency Management Council

The system of emergency management is a network of local, state, and federal disaster preparedness programs, emergency response agencies, disaster recovery organizations, and countless other public and private partners.

Local government's primary responsibility is to protect lives, preserve property and the environment, and protect public health. These public goals are supported in Washington State by a statewide system of emergency management, created from a network of local, state, and federal disaster preparedness programs, emergency response agencies, disaster recovery organizations, and countless other public and private partners. The discipline of emergency management coordinates the efforts of these many partners. It mitigates, plans for, and coordinates response to and recovery from natural and human-caused disasters that exceed the capacity of individual local response agencies.

In 2003, the Washington State Emergency Management Council (EMC) created the Task Force on Local Programs to look at "the state of emergency management" in Washington's counties, cities and tribes. The EMC asked the Task Force to conduct this study as part of its annual report to the Governor on statewide emergency preparedness.

Task Force Objectives

The Task Force was chartered to: 1) clearly define existing requirements for emergency management in Washington State; 2) examine the current local capability to provide comprehensive emergency management, and meet newly identified responsibilities such as counter-terrorism and homeland security planning; 3) identify what local programs need to effectively meet defined responsibilities; and 4) develop recommendations to align local abilities with current and future risks and requirements.

This study was designed to identify the strengths and the gaps in local and tribal governments' ability to mitigate, plan for, respond to, and recover from the unique combination of hazards that exist in Washington State—both natural and human-caused.

Task Force Membership

The Task Force, co-chaired by Thurston County Commissioner Diane Oberquell and City of Bridgeport Mayor Steve Jenkins, is composed of both voting members and non-voting, ex-officio members. A project team from the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) and Association of Washington Cities (AWC) was selected to facilitate and support the Task Force efforts.

Study Methodology

In mid-2003, the Emergency Management Council approved a one-year work plan for the Task Force to conduct a comprehensive review of "the state of emergency management" in Washington's counties, cities and tribes. The findings and conclusions included in this report were developed after the Task Force conducted document research, interviews, facilitated group discussions, site visits, and a survey of local emergency management programs.

Three surveys were developed. One version was designed for counties and cities responsible for providing their own emergency management services, a second was for tribes, and a third, shorter version was aimed at city members of joint local programs.

All 39 county programs responded to the survey. In total, these 39 counties are responsible for providing emergency management services to 66 percent of Washington's 6.1 residents. Of the 87 cities responsible for providing their own citywide emergency management services, 53 responded to the survey, representing an additional 28 percent of Washington's population.

Ten of the 29 federally recognized tribes responded to the survey, representing over 53 percent of the population of Washington's tribal lands. One hundred twenty-eight, or 66 percent, of the 194 cities that are part of a joint local organization for emergency management responded to a shorter version of the survey. Sixty-five of these cities did not respond to the survey; 56 of these non-respondents were cities with populations below 5,000.

The results of this total effort were used to identify the systemic improvements to Washington State's system of emergency management recommended in this report.

Additional Benefits

While survey and research results are used here to paint a broad picture of the health of the emergency management system in Washington State, many surveyed jurisdictions are using their individual survey results in a variety of ways. Some are using the survey to begin a conversation with local officials and to raise awareness of emergency management. Others are using their survey results to report to local officials on the state of local and statewide emergency management. Other counties, cities, and tribes are using these results to establish a baseline against which future

The results of this effort are used to identify and recommend systemic improvements to the statewide system of emergency management.

program enhancements can be measured. Some jurisdictions are using the results to provide input into the regional homeland security local grant and other resource allocation processes.

The Task Force believes that this study has achieved additional benefits as well as its original objectives. The study has created a foundation upon which local emergency management programs can base current capabilities, enhance those capabilities to meet expanding requirements, and articulate the additional support and assistance needed to effectively protect and enhance the statewide system of emergency management in Washington State. Because the statewide system of emergency management is necessarily a network of individual—predominantly local—programs, the Task Force believes an ongoing state-level commitment to local programs will be required to achieve any system improvements, and to maintain our ability to effectively protect the citizens of Washington State from disaster.

Trends in Emergency Management

The mission of emergency management agencies today is much broader than the mission given the predecessor civil defense agencies of the 1950s and 1960s. Today emergency management agencies respond to almost all disasters and emergencies that occur...natural disasters...as well as man-made and homeland security type incidents.

—A Governor's Primer on All Hazards Emergency Management
National Emergency Management Association

Emergency management, like most professions, is constantly evolving. Most recently, the profession has been affected by such national trends as the increasing focus on homeland security and the resulting emphasis on collaboration and coordination, regionalization, and grant management, as well as the emergence of professional standards.

Homeland Security

It is not the role of emergency management that has changed since September 11, 2001, but rather the growing awareness and visibility.

Many emergency managers agree that it is not the role of emergency management that has changed since September 11, 2001, but rather the growing awareness and visibility of the profession. "Communities started planning for terrorist events...long before September 11, 2001," says Phyllis A. Mann, former president of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), and director of Kitsap County Emergency Management. Shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks, the National Association of Counties conducted a survey of over 100 counties in 48 states, including 15 counties in Washington State. Forty-nine percent of responding counties reported that they already had emergency response or preparedness plans for terrorist activities. Based upon his recent research in emergency management and homeland security, however, Professor Steven Stehr, Chair of the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice at Washington State University, stated that the threat of a terrorist attack has supplanted the threat of natural hazards in the public's mind.

On March 1, 2003, approximately 180,000 personnel from 22 federal organizations were reorganized to establish the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Since that time, at least 10 states have established a unique position of Director of Homeland Security and others have established a separate Department of Homeland Security.

Many states have integrated homeland security into a pre-existing all hazards emergency management approach.

Many states, including Washington, have integrated homeland security into a pre-existing all hazards emergency management approach to provide greater coordination and maximize state and federal funds. The current challenge has been to capitalize on existing disaster management systems while incorporating several unique homeland security considerations, including the need for:

- Information sharing and increased coordination among political leaders, law enforcement, emergency management, public health, agriculture, natural resources, private industry, and others;
- Preserving evidence and investigating the criminal aspect of terrorism while simultaneously saving lives and restoring essential services; and
- Specialized training and equipment to respond to events involving weapons of mass destruction and the possibility of mass casualties caused by weapons of mass destruction.

Collaboration and Coordination

The role of emergency management has always been to coordinate the planning and response efforts of many agencies and organizations. Coordination and collaboration efforts have increased since September 11, 2001, however, as groups other than traditional emergency responders—including sovereign tribal nations—have become crucial participants in disaster mitigation, planning, response, and recovery. At least three constituencies are taking a much more prominent role in today's emergency management: public health, private industry, and private individuals.

At least three constituencies are taking a much more prominent role in today's emergency management: public health, private industry, and private citizens.

- *Public Health.* Nationally, there has been a significant effort to enhance public health response primarily through planning for the receipt and distribution of pharmaceutical stockpiles and the purchase of decontamination units for hospitals. In Washington, an increasing number of the 34 local public health jurisdictions have completed or are completing comprehensive emergency response plans consistent with their counties' emergency management plans. Many are exercising and training with the state and their cities and counties, as last year's state and local exercises related to hoof and mouth disease illustrate.
- *Private Industry.* Collaboration with the private sector, particularly to ensure continuity of operations and the protection of people and critical infrastructure, is now a critical function of emergency management. Private sector representation on the Governor's Emergency Management Council and other state and local councils is one example of this increasing collaboration.
- *Private Individuals.* Citizen Corps was established as a part of USA Freedom Corps in early 2002 to coordinate volunteer activities that improve local community disaster preparedness and response, and to increase responder and volunteer collaboration. Since 2002, well over 1,000 county, city, and tribal Citizen Corps Councils have been established in more than 50 states

and territories. In Washington, nearly 300 Citizen Corps trainers have trained over 6,300 community members in neighborhood preparedness and all hazards. These growing Citizen Corps numbers are just one example of two broader national trends: increasing funding and program availability for public education and training, and rising public awareness of and participation in disaster preparedness.

Regionalization

Washington, like most states, has long had operational regions for traditional response agencies such as fire defense and fire protection. Regional approaches for law enforcement, public health, and natural resource agencies are becoming more common. Most recently, many states have adopted homeland security coordination regions.

In November 2002, Washington's 39 counties and their cities were configured into nine regional homeland security coordination districts for the purposes of distributing federal grants, developing priority lists of equipment needs for first responders, executing training exercises, and creating regionally based mutual aid plans. While adopted for homeland security purposes, some of these districts also are coordinating the development or update of local Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans (CEMP), as well as Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Assessments (HIVA) and Emergency Operations Center assessments. As a result of this regionalization, collaboration has increased among disciplines and with other jurisdictions and tribes.

Funding and Grant Management

Perhaps one of the most significant impacts of homeland security as a national priority is the flow of federal funding to local emergency management programs. Through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Justice, the current administration has provided a total of \$13.1 billion dollars in direct homeland security grants from federal fiscal year (FFY) 2002 to FFY 2004, compared to only \$1.2 billion allocated from FFY 1999 to FFY 2001. This represents more than a 900 percent increase in homeland security spending.

However, these grant funds are only available to state and local emergency management programs to reimburse approved homeland security expenditures. As a result, many small local programs across the nation do not apply for these grant funds because their existing limited budgets prevent them from making reimbursable purchases.

Other states and local jurisdictions are still waiting to receive first responder grant funds. As of February 2004, most State Homeland Security Grant Program funds, worth more than \$2 billion, were awarded by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Domestic Preparedness, but remained in the U.S. Treasury.

The growing reliance on grant dollars, the complexity of application and reporting requirements, and the uncertainty of future grant resources all have contributed to increasing administrative requirements.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's proposed budget for FFY 2005 would result in significant changes to the Emergency Management Performance Grant, which has traditionally supported comprehensive all hazard emergency management by providing matching funds to state and local emergency management organizations. The proposal would cut the total funding available from \$179 million to \$170 million and shift more of the program's emphasis from all hazards to terrorism.

The growing reliance on grant dollars, the complexity of application and reporting requirements, and the uncertainty of future grant resources all have contributed to several new challenges for local emergency management programs.

- *Grants Management.* While one-quarter of Washington's local programs rely on grants for at least 50 percent of their budgets, less than one-half of the jurisdictions participating in this study have adequate staffing and are able to apply for and administer grant resources.
- *Spending Flexibility.* The use of federal homeland security dollars is tightly restricted and frequently does not match the broader planning, training, equipment, and other operational priorities of local emergency management programs. The challenge for emergency managers is twofold. Homeland security purchases must have broader applications and be maintained to have a useful life after funding becomes unavailable.
- *Long-Term Stability.* As noted above, one-quarter of Washington's local programs rely upon grants for at least 50 percent of their budgets, and more than two-thirds of the local programs participating in this study rely upon grants for at least some portion of their budgets. As a result, critical emergency management services, if not entire programs, may be in jeopardy if grants become unavailable.

Professionalization

The growing professionalization of emergency management nationwide is introducing performance standards, standardized operations and performance measurements for local programs, as well as educational opportunities for emergency management professionals.

The growing professionalization of emergency management nationwide is introducing performance standards, standardized operations and performance measurements to local programs.

- *Performance Standards.* The earliest attempt to develop standards for emergency management can be traced back to the Civil Preparedness Guide published by the U.S. Defense Civil Preparedness Agency—forerunner to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—in 1972. As emergency management systems have matured, more recent attempts to create a commonly accepted national standard for emergency preparedness have achieved some success.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards Council originally established a Disaster Management Committee in 1991 to develop

preparedness, response and recovery guidelines for disasters. First presented in 1995, and most recently updated this year, the Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs provides a standardized basis for disaster and emergency management planning and business continuity programs in the private and public sectors. It provides common program elements, techniques, and processes for both before and after a disaster. Although the NFPA standard is voluntary, it was developed in cooperation with and has been endorsed by the FEMA, the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), and the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM).

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has adopted the NFPA standard, which is expected to become the basis for the program accreditation effort being developed by FEMA and NEMA, the Emergency Management Accreditation Process (EMAP).

- *Standardized Operations.* The National Response Plan (NRP), issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in early 2004 after considering reviews and comments from state and local jurisdictions, introduces a unified and coordinated approach to incident command. The NRP provides interoperability and compatibility among federal, state, local, and tribal capabilities through a core set of concepts, principles, and terminology, including a standardized Incident Command System (ICS). While the standard is required for federal agencies, all state, local, tribal and supporting private sector organizations are encouraged to adopt it.

In California, a standardized ICS has been used since the 1970s. State and local agencies report better information sharing and communication management among response agencies. They also report increased collaboration among all response partners as a result of the wide adoption and consistent use of the ICS.

- *Performance Measures.* Since they were first offered by the federal government, Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG), formerly known as State and Local Assistance (SLA) grants, have always included such requirements as performance and financial reports, audits, and record retention. This link to performance measures is increasingly common among federal grants for emergency management. Today, all federal homeland security grant-funded projects and exercises—state and local—must be tied to goals and performance measures.

The 2004 Washington State Homeland Security Strategic Plan has over 50 performance measures for its seven statewide homeland security and all hazards goals. In a separate effort, at least 10 distinct performance indicators and measures for emergency preparedness and response, including homeland security, are included in the Governor's Priorities of Government budget process.

There are over 100 different accredited programs in nearly 40 states offering individual credentials, professional certification or degree programs to emergency management professionals.

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- *Educational Opportunities.* As emergency management systems mature, the discipline of emergency management is benefiting from a proliferation of training and educational opportunities. There are now over 100 accredited programs in nearly 40 states offering individual credentials, professional certification or degree programs to emergency management professionals. The number of programs is growing each year.

Emergency Management in Washington State

Local government's responsibility first and foremost is to protect lives, preserve property and the environment, and protect public health. These priorities are what are required of local emergency management.

—A survey respondent

Local responders are the first line of defense and recovery from emergencies and disasters, both natural and human-caused.

In Washington State, local emergency management agencies are the first response to emergencies and disasters. Washington's 39 counties are responsible for providing emergency management services to two-thirds of the state's residents. Eighty-seven cities are responsible for providing these same services to their residents, and for establishing their own local programs. The remaining 194 of Washington's 281 cities are members of joint local organizations with their county or neighboring jurisdictions. The tribal programs of 29 federally recognized Washington tribes are responsible for providing emergency management services to less than one percent of the state's residents.

Local Programs

There is significant diversity in the ways local programs are organized, managed, funded, and staffed.

Local Organization

Emergency management responsibilities are assigned by county and city governing authorities to a wide variety of disciplines within their organizations. The most common disciplines include stand-alone emergency management, public safety or law enforcement, fire protection, and general government, including elected officials or city or county administrators, public health, and public works.

Relationships between counties and cities also vary. Nearly three out of every four counties provide emergency management services for some or all of the cities within their borders. While many of these counties have an established joint local organization or formal contract with those cities, nearly one-half operate under less formal, often unwritten, agreements. In many of these counties, joint councils are

equally informal or do not exist at all. The lack of a formal structure, in addition to inconsistent city participation on these councils, has resulted in unpredictable and sporadic participation in planning, training, and exercises.

While 70 percent of county emergency managers dedicate over 90 percent of their time to their emergency management responsibilities, only 10 percent of cities have full-time emergency managers.

Emergency Managers

The time that emergency managers are able to dedicate to emergency management, rather than to other duties, also varies widely among local programs. While 70 percent of county emergency managers dedicate over 90 percent of their time to emergency management, only five of the 53 responding cities that provide their own emergency management services have full-time emergency managers. In 80 percent of responding cities, designated emergency managers spend less than 25 percent of their time on the same responsibilities. None of the nine responding tribes have full-time directors.

Program Budgets

Funding for local emergency management programs in Washington is complex and sometimes unpredictable. Local programs rely upon multiple funding sources, including local general funds, federal dollars, state funding, and grants with occasional matching assistance from the state.

Annual expenditures for emergency management in counties range from approximately \$10 to less than \$1 per resident, and the average is almost \$4 per person. Cities that manage their own emergency management programs spend an average of approximately \$1.25 per resident, ranging from approximately \$5 per person to nothing. Since emergency management programs must adhere to the same requirements to mitigate, plan for, respond to, and recover from disasters, regardless of the size of their jurisdiction, it is also helpful to consider total program budget.

Total annual program budgets for counties average \$250,000 and range from \$300 to more than \$1.5 million. Cities range is from \$1.5 million to nothing and average just over \$80,000. About 70 percent of local programs report that at least 50 percent of their budget comes from general operating funds. One-quarter of the programs rely on grants for at least 50 percent of their budgets and with nearly 15 percent count on grants for more than 90 percent. Approximately five percent receive most of their funding from other sources, such as service fees.

Staffing

While county emergency management programs employ an average of 2.5 full-time and 0.5 part-time staff members, the range among both county and city programs varies widely, and, due to small staffing numbers, does not always correspond with jurisdiction population. In county programs, approximately half of total staff positions are grant funded. As a result, nearly 50 percent of Washington's county emergency management professionals are at risk if grant funding becomes unavailable.

Local programs additionally rely on volunteer resources. There are over 1,600 Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency

Services (RACES) volunteers who work with emergency management and the local response agencies participating in the study.

In the state of Washington, local emergency management programs are governed by both existing legal authorities and requirements that they effectively mitigate, plan for, respond to, and recover from natural and human-caused disasters.

Legal Authorities and Requirements

Emergency management in Washington is authorized by the laws contained in Chapter 38.52 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). State criteria for emergency management funds, workers, organizations, services and plans, and disaster recovery are outlined in Title 118 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC).

Each political subdivision is authorized and directed to establish a local organization or to be a member of a joint local organization for emergency management in accordance with the state comprehensive emergency management plan and program, and to appoint a director responsible for the organization, administration, and operation of the local organization, subject to the direction and control of the executive officer or officers of the political subdivision (RCW 38.52.070). More specifically, WAC 118-30 establishes the responsibilities of political subdivisions:

1. Each political subdivision must establish an emergency management organization by ordinance or resolution passed by the legislative body of the political subdivision. Two or more political subdivisions may join in the establishment of an emergency management organization.
2. Each political subdivision shall develop, promulgate and submit to the State a comprehensive emergency management plan.
3. Each political subdivision shall submit an emergency management program paper annually to the director not less than 60 days prior to the beginning of the calendar year.

The Washington State Military Department is responsible for carrying out all emergency management functions at the state level. The state's Emergency Management Division (EMD) administers the state emergency management program.

Hazards and Vulnerabilities

Local emergency management programs mitigate, prepare for, and coordinate the response to and recovery from both natural and human-caused disasters. In doing so, local emergency management performs the tasks required to meet local government's first responsibility to protect lives, preserve property and the environment, and protect public health.

*The state has received
37 Presidential
Disaster Declarations
since 1956—all for
natural disasters.*

Natural Hazards

The state has received 37 Presidential Disaster Declarations since 1956—all for natural disasters. The 2004 State Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Assessment (HIVA) identifies nine natural hazards to which the state of Washington is most vulnerable:

- Avalanche
- Drought
- Earthquake
- Flood
- Landslide
- Severe storm
- Tsunami
- Volcano
- Wild land fire

Effective preservation of life and public health, as well as protection of property, the environment, and the community's economic base requires emergency management programs to mitigate and plan for, through ongoing training and exercises, a disaster involving each of these natural hazards.

Human-Caused Hazards

Most recently, local emergency managers have been required to integrate homeland security and human-caused hazards, such as chemical, biological, radiological nuclear and explosive accidents and terrorist acts, into Washington's all hazard approach to emergency management.

Washington faces a unique set of challenges that increases its vulnerability to human-caused disasters. Washington covers more than 66,582 square miles of terrain and has a 325-mile border with Canada, which contains several minor and one major international border crossings. More than 75 percent of the state's six million inhabitants live in the corridor that extends from Bellingham in the north to Olympia in the south and contains highly congested traffic corridors.

The Ports of Seattle and Tacoma together are the third largest container load center in the United States. They ship a significant portion of the nation's goods and commodities, and represent a substantial national risk. The Seattle-Tacoma International Airport transports nearly 27 million domestic and international passengers each year.

Making use of its wealth of rivers, high snow pack, and more than 1,000 dams, Washington has several major power facilities that serve many states.

There is a significant nuclear waste storage at Hanford, in south central Washington. Immediately south of the Oregon line, the Umatilla Chemical Depot creates additional state risks.

Washington additionally houses several large and strategically important military installations.

Emergency managers are increasing the coordination and collaboration of multidisciplinary response agencies and organizations, including less traditional partners in emergency management such as public health, private industry, and private citizen groups.

Finally, the large number of national corporations, leading agricultural producers, and key historical buildings all are potential targets.

Emergency managers are charged with integrating the risk and vulnerability of these unique threats into their all hazards mitigation and planning efforts. They are also increasing the coordination and collaboration of multidisciplinary response agencies and organizations, including less traditional partners in emergency management such as public health, private industry, and private citizen groups.

National Incident Management System

Beginning October 1, 2004, state and local programs and organizations are required to adopt the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a condition for federal preparedness assistance. NIMS integrates effective practices in emergency response into a comprehensive national framework for incident management. It provides a consistent nationwide approach for federal, state, local, and tribal governments to work together effectively and efficiently to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from natural and human-caused disasters, regardless of their size or complexity. NIMS establishes standardized incident management protocols and procedures to improve the coordination and cooperation among functional disciplines, between public and private entities, and across the full spectrum of potential natural disasters and human-caused incidents, including domestic terrorism and homeland security related events. All federal departments and agencies have already been required to adopt NIMS for their own activities and for the activities in which they assist state, local, and tribal entities.

Study Findings

Emergency management requires dedication, collaboration, and trust. The formal system of emergency management can help or hinder those needed factors.

—A local emergency manager

Inconsistencies across local emergency management programs compromise overall statewide disaster preparedness.

In Washington, the personal dedication of individual emergency managers and local programs are sustaining current levels of capability. Washington is recognized across the nation for the strength of its emergency management and disaster response, as well as for its recent efforts to prepare for domestic threats.

However, the survey findings and research results of this study demonstrate that inconsistencies across local emergency management programs compromise overall statewide disaster preparedness.

This section identifies both the strengths of the emergency management system in Washington, as well as the challenges local programs face.

Strengths

1. **Emergency management in Washington State has been strengthened by a growing trend toward professionalization in the discipline.**

As emergency management systems nationwide mature, emergency management is increasingly recognized as a vital discipline and a growing profession. While Washington cities and tribes commonly do not have a full-time emergency management director, at least 20 counties have stand-alone emergency management organizations, and 27 county emergency management directors are able to dedicate over 90 percent of their time to such responsibilities.

The emergency management profession benefits from a proliferation of training and educational opportunities. More than 100 accredited programs in nearly 40 states offer individual credentials, professional certification, or degree programs to emergency management professionals. In Washington, the University of Washington,

Western Washington University and Clover Park Technical College all offer graduate coursework.

2. **Requirements to develop or update hazard identification plans, mitigation plans and comprehensive emergency management plans, as well as the grant funding to meet those requirements, have increased overall planning and preparedness in Washington.**

In July 2004, the *Washington State Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan* was approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), making Washington the first state in the nation to have a federally approved plan.

Beginning in November 2004, FEMA will also require local emergency management programs to institute a mitigation plan to be eligible for post-disaster assistance funds, as well as pre-disaster mitigation grants. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security requires local programs to develop hazard identification plans and emergency management plans, and has made funds available to those programs. Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) grants have provided additional federal assistance to update emergency and disaster plans.

In the past two years, over 25 counties and 20 cities have developed or updated their Comprehensive Emergency Management Program (CEMP). More than 45 local programs have developed or are developing a Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Assessment (HIVA).

3. **Recent events such as the Nisqually earthquake in 2001 and recurring disasters such as wild land fires in eastern and central Washington and floods in western Washington regularly test the readiness and improve the capabilities of local and state emergency management.**

Washington has achieved and successfully tested its current state of readiness with a relatively few number of major natural disasters.

While other states such as Florida and California regularly suffer significant disasters, testing and modifying their response and recovery capabilities each time, Washington has achieved and successfully tested its current state of readiness with a relatively small number of major natural disasters.

4. **The use of a standardized incident command system for disaster response increases collaboration as well as the consistency and effectiveness of response operations.**

Ninety-four percent of city, county and tribal jurisdictions participating in this study report using an Incident Command System (ICS) for disaster response. The survey and research findings in this report confirm that the adoption of ICS is broad, leading to greater statewide consistency in disaster response.

5. The recent focus on homeland security has fostered increasing regional collaboration.

Since the establishment in 2002 of regional homeland security coordination districts in Washington, all nine regions have begun to participate in regional planning, training, and exercises.

Collaboration has also increased among counties, cities and tribal nations. A growing number of tribes are participating in regional homeland security planning and developing emergency management plans consistent with other state and local plans. In general, tribes report that the new regions have provided them with an opportunity for greater participation than they have historically had with neighboring county and city jurisdictions. Additionally, a significant number of local programs are creating new mutual aid agreements and updating existing agreements with adjoining jurisdictions.

6. The integration of new homeland security responsibilities into the existing statewide emergency management structure has increased cross-discipline coordination and information sharing, and strengthened the existing all hazards model for emergency preparedness.

While some states responded to increased requirements for counter-terrorism and homeland security planning after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 by creating new state-level departments of homeland security, Washington integrated these new requirements into an already existing all hazards approach to provide greater coordination, minimize duplication of effort, and maximize state and federal funds.

Challenges

1. While performance standards for emergency management are gaining broader acceptance, the absence of a single standard applied consistently across the state makes it difficult to define baseline capabilities or assess current levels of preparedness.

The absence of a single standard applied consistently statewide makes it difficult to define baseline capabilities or assess current levels of preparedness.

One of the earliest attempts at developing standards for emergency management can be traced back to the Civil Preparedness Guide, published by the U.S. Defense Civil Preparedness Agency—forerunner to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—in 1972. More than 30 years later, no commonly accepted national standards for emergency preparedness exist. As a result, the essential capabilities that every jurisdiction of a particular size should have or have immediate access to are not understood consistently across the nation.

While there have been more recent attempts to establish minimum standards, such as the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) *Standard on Disaster/Emergency*

Management and Business Continuity Programs, these standards remain voluntary and have not been formally adopted by local jurisdictions in Washington.

2. **While statewide emergency management in Washington exceeds the preparedness levels of many other states, emergency management and homeland security capabilities at the local level often do not meet the basic needs of local jurisdictions.**

While most counties and cities with local emergency management programs have established sufficient planning and response capabilities, the survey and research results of this study indicate that most local programs lack the funding, training, exercises, facilities, equipment, and staff to adequately mitigate and recover from emergencies or disasters.

Many cities that participate in their county program and report infrequent communication with their county also report little participation in planning, training, and exercising, as well as less satisfaction with their city's level of preparedness. Many of these county-city relationships that are formed by a "handshake" can be less than effective.

3. **While most local programs report that state and local laws are sufficient to support local emergency management and anti-terrorism efforts, a lack of procedural compliance and limited enforcement contribute to a patchwork of capable and less-than-capable programs as well as inconsistencies in disaster preparedness.**

Existing state law requires each political subdivision to establish a local emergency management organization, or to be a member of a joint local organization. The law also directs political subdivisions to appoint a director, develop a comprehensive emergency management plan, and submit an annual emergency management program paper. It further encourages local programs to develop hazard mitigation plans, and to use a uniform incident command system for disaster response operations.

A patchwork of widely ranging response capability compromises overall preparedness, especially in multi-jurisdictional emergencies and disasters.

Existing state law does little, however, to measure the quality of local programs or the commitment of emergency management directors. It does not compel cities and counties to meet these requirements, nor does it give the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) the authority to compel local jurisdictions to comply. State law does not establish a mechanism to enforce the law, nor does it clarify such terms as "local organization," or "director." Many jurisdictions currently comply with this law by delegating emergency management responsibilities to a sheriff, police chief or fire chief as additional duties. The result is a mix of capable and less-than-capable emergency management programs across the state. This wide range of response capability, from very capable to inadequate, compromises overall preparedness, especially in multi-jurisdictional emergencies and disasters.

Disparities in the organization, staffing and funding of local programs have led to significant inconsistencies in statewide capability and preparedness.

4. Disparities in resources for local program have led to significant inconsistencies in statewide capability and preparedness.

Of the jurisdictions surveyed in this study, those with full-time emergency management directors or managers, rate overall preparedness higher than those whose directors or managers are not full-time. Overall preparedness is significantly lower in jurisdictions with directors or managers who are only able to devote less than 20 percent of their time to these responsibilities.

Small cities in particular struggle to maintain readiness for a disaster. Cities with a population less than 5,000 that are responsible for their own emergency management consistently report inadequate capability to mitigate, plan for, respond to, and recover from an emergency or disaster. Such cities commonly delegate emergency management responsibilities to a director who is not full-time and who also occupies another significant position, such as city mayor, administrator, police, or fire official.

A lack of adequate dedicated support resources available at the state level contributes to lower levels of overall local preparedness.

5. A lack of adequate dedicated support resources available at the state level contributes to lower levels of overall local preparedness, specifically, inadequate capability levels in mitigation and planning, and insufficient training and exercises, regional collaboration, and local outreach.

The short turn-around time and tremendous administrative requirements of homeland security grants have subsumed other activities at the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD), according to both EMD staff and local directors. As a result, mitigation activities, local planning assistance, and outreach efforts are not being performed at previous levels and are inadequate to effectively support local emergency management programs. Many local programs, struggling to maintain even a minimum of preparedness, report that a state liaison that is able to provide assistance, guidance and technical expertise could make the most significant impact on local preparedness and capabilities.

6. There is a lack of routine communication within and among local jurisdictions regarding emergency management requirements, roles, responsibilities, and resources.

At the local level, cities with a population less than 5,000 that are members of a joint local organization with their county are more likely than larger cities to report lower levels of communication with their county. This leads to less small city participation in planning, training, and exercising, and less confidence in, and satisfaction with, their city's level of overall preparedness.

Many of these small cities, as well as other jurisdictions participating in this study, identify a lack of planning assistance, training and exercise support, sample documents, guidelines, and other technical resources. Many of these resources, however, are available to varying degrees from the Washington State Emergency

Management Division (EMD), the Washington State Emergency Management Association (WSEMA), Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) and other sources. While many local programs use this resource sharing, many others are unaware that such resources exist.

- 7. A lack of consistent emergency management and homeland security education programs for local elected officials has created uncertainty among those officials concerning their statutory and operational emergency management responsibilities. Such ambiguities contribute to statewide inconsistencies in funding, resources, and prioritizing of emergency management.**

Local governing bodies are an integral part of the statewide system of emergency management in Washington. They are the legal entities that establish policy, enact legislation, and hold the legal authority to determine the ways public and private monies are acquired, used, and disposed of.

Some local elected officials are ill equipped to meet their significant emergency management responsibilities.

Washington state law assigns to local elected officials the responsibility for emergency management, establishing a local program, and appointing an emergency management director. Nonetheless, local jurisdictions participating in the study report that local support for emergency management is well below what it should be. This is partly due to the lack of consistent, ongoing training and education for local officials on the scope and importance of their emergency management responsibilities.

Approximately two out of every five local programs that participated in this study report lacking an effective way to communicate with their chief elected or appointed official during a disaster. Frequent turnover, limited training or education, lack of familiarity with state requirements and local ordinances, and lack of communication and interaction with the emergency management program and its delegated director leaves some local elected officials ill equipped to meet their primary responsibilities during an emergency or disaster.

While emergency management training courses for elected officials have been developed jointly by the Washington State Emergency Management Association (WSEMA), the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) and the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC), no standard approved curriculum exists. The official training that is offered is unavailable on an ongoing basis and further limited by inadequate local funds to support travel and training.

- 8. Though increasing, the still limited collection of local public education programs has left the general public largely unaware of its role in emergency preparedness and its responsibilities when a disaster occurs.**

According to the Washington State Emergency Management Council's (EMC) 2004 Annual Assessment, much of the public is still largely unaware of its responsibilities

when a disaster occurs. Residents tend to be confused about what assistance to expect and what may be required of them until that assistance arrives. Only 58 percent of jurisdictions participating in this study have an emergency preparedness public education program. Even fewer have a Public Information Officer.

Citizen Corps is expanding public awareness and increasing the number of Washington residents trained in neighborhood preparedness. Nevertheless, much more public outreach, education, and training are still required to reach the majority of Washington's residents.

9. Reliance on funding sources that are sometimes insufficient, inaccessible, or restricted is increasing the administrative requirements for grants management and limiting local programs' ability to effectively maintain adequate disaster preparedness.

In Washington, funding for local programs is complex, due to the large number of funding sources that must be managed. Furthermore, available funding may fluctuate each year, rendering the process somewhat unpredictable. Managing homeland security costs and funding add to this complexity. The majority of jurisdictions participating in this study report that available funding is inadequate to meet all of emergency management's needs. As a result, planning and response efforts are emphasized and mitigation, training, exercises, and long-term recovery efforts are compromised.

Local programs rely largely upon grants and federal dollars, in addition to some state funding. The most common federal grant program is the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG). However, the EMPG requires non-federal matching funds, leaving some small jurisdictions without these grant dollars altogether. Furthermore, there is a real concern that EMPG funding will be reduced nationwide in the near future.

The State Emergency Management Division (EMD) is funded by an annual allocation from the State General Fund as well as a variety of state and federal grants, including EMPG funds that require non-federal matching dollars and homeland security funds. Without these multiple federal funding sources, EMD would be unable to sustain program operations or its current levels of service and support to local programs, even considering their significant restrictions governing expenditures.

Study Recommendations

Local emergency management is most successful when it is supported by a system of national guidelines, state outreach, local priority, and public awareness.

—Anonymous

Systemic change will require an ongoing state-level commitment to local programs, a stable statewide funding source, and significant outreach efforts.

All disasters are local disasters. Local jurisdictions—county and city—and tribes are therefore our first line of defense and recovery from both natural disasters and human-caused chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive accidents or terrorist acts. Accordingly, the statewide system of emergency management in Washington is necessarily a network of individual—predominantly local—programs.

This study's recommendations reflect the survey and research findings as well as the analysis and conclusions of the Task Force on Local Programs. They aim to achieve significant, long-lasting improvement in the system of emergency management in Washington State. However, the Task Force recognizes that such systemic change will require more than just the recommendations identified in this report. The Task Force believes successful implementation will require an ongoing state-level commitment to local programs, a stable statewide fund and funding source to support local disaster preparedness and mitigation, and significant outreach efforts to provide the needed training and education.

The Task Force has identified:

- Recommendations for systemic change to restructure and improve the statewide system
- Recommendations for administrative action to strengthen the statewide system
- Recommendations for legislative action
- Immediate next steps

When implemented together, these recommendations for system change have the potential to dramatically restructure—and improve—the system of emergency management in Washington State.

Recommendations for Systemic Change

While each of the following five recommendations could be implemented independently to achieve incremental structural improvement, they could, if implemented together, dramatically restructure the system of emergency management to significantly enhance emergency preparedness and public safety in Washington. The Task Force intends that these recommendations build upon each other.

- Recommendation 1.* Potentially aligns the boundaries of the existing emergency response and planning regions.
- Recommendation 2.* Organizationally institutes cross-discipline planning and coordination.
- Recommendation 3.* Establishes local, sub-regional operational areas.
- Recommendation 4.* Provides designated state-level liaisons to local programs.
- Recommendation 5.* Establishes stable, long-term funding.

Implemented together, these five recommendations can contribute to:

- Streamlined cross-discipline communication
- Increased collaboration and response effectiveness
- More effective regional planning
- Closer alignment of administrative and operational command structures
- Improved coordination among local jurisdictions
- Simplified communication between state and local programs
- More realistic service delivery areas for state services to local programs
- The long-term health and stability of the emergency management system in Washington State

1. Evaluate the benefits and feasibility of aligning the boundaries of existing Emergency Medical Services Regions, Bio-Terrorism Regions, Fire Mobilization Regions, Law Enforcement Mobilization Regions, and Regional Homeland Security Coordination Districts.

Regional alignment has the potential to better support mutual aid and regional planning and can lead to more coordinated and effective disaster response, greater resource sharing, improved communication, decreased duplication of effort, and simplified administrative requirements.

Of the five regional structures, two are codified in state law (Fire Mobilization and Law Enforcement Mobilization) and only one does not overlap with another regional structure (Emergency Medical Services). Fire and law enforcement mobilization have identical regional boundaries, and the existing regional homeland security district

boundaries are the same as for bio-terrorism regions. Only existing Emergency Medical Services regions do not align with another regional structure.

Considerations: The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) regional boundaries were established based upon patient flow to hospitals. Any potential realignment of these EMS regions will have to evaluate the original purposes of the existing regional boundaries and incorporate an effective approach to meet existing needs and constraints.

2. Establish emergency management planning regions for planning, collaborating, coordinating, and sharing information among disaster preparedness and response entities.

Recognizing the benefits of regional coordination, the existing regional homeland security coordination districts have already begun to support the development or update of local Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans (CEMP), Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Assessments (HIVA), and Emergency Operations Center assessments. Furthermore, these districts are increasing collaboration across disciplines and among local jurisdictions and tribes. Instituting an administrative regional structure that overlays and complements the aligned regional boundaries established in Recommendation 1 will facilitate regional planning, joint training and exercise, and overall collaboration among all disciplines that have disaster preparedness, response, or recovery responsibilities in a region. Establishing this structure as a permanent all hazards planning entity, independent of homeland security requirements, will insulate its many benefits from the constantly evolving requirements and long-term unpredictability of homeland security funding.

Considerations: Establishing any new organizational structure, even new administrative regions, will require a review of the administrative requirements to support this new structure, including funding and staffing. The roles and responsibilities of potential regional councils, lead agencies, and regional coordinators, as well as state Emergency Management Division liaison staff assigned to support these regions, must be clearly defined. This recommendation is contingent upon securing stable, long-term funding.

3. Examine the potential benefits and increased efficiencies of sub-regional operational areas defined around individual county boundaries and administered through representative participation as determined by the county and the cities within it.

The potential advantages of local, sub-regional, operational areas are evident in other states that use this model. First, establishing area councils that represent all emergency preparedness and response entities, including all independent county and city programs and potentially other disciplines such as public health, agriculture, and special districts, can facilitate improved communication and collaboration among local

jurisdictions. Operational areas can also improve resource sharing and tracking, and maximize the use of local resources.

Creating a single county-level contact organization for the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) can streamline communication between local programs and the state and deliver state support to the local level more efficiently. This improved efficiency becomes critical during a disaster, when time and resources are most valued. This organizational model would create 39 local operational areas with which the EMD would directly communicate, rather than the more than 100 independent local programs that operate in Washington.

Considerations:

Any restructuring of the existing model of emergency management in Washington should be carefully evaluated and the risks should be clearly identified. Cities and counties perceive a transition to operational areas, even with representative councils, as a loss of local control. Counties may see such action as an unfunded mandate.

4. Establish designated local liaisons within the Washington State Emergency Management Division.

Local emergency management programs work most effectively when supported by a strong, well-resourced state program.

Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) staff and local directors agree that mitigation activities, local planning assistance, and outreach efforts have all been compromised by the short turn-around and tremendous administrative requirements of homeland security grants. As in other states, local programs work most effectively when supported by a strong state program. Designated local liaisons will provide local programs with assistance, guidance and technical expertise, as well as help coordinate regional collaboration, planning, training, and exercises. Designated local liaisons can also assist local programs with the training and ongoing education of local elected and appointed officials. In the face of constant change among elected officials, local emergency managers and their state partners provide continuity to local programs and are a knowledge resource for local officials.

Considerations: Increasing the level of support to local programs and providing designated local liaisons may require a reallocation or significant increase in resources. The Task Force does not intend that any reallocation of resources compromise programs that are currently performing well with adequate resources, such as the grant and public education programs.

5. Establish a stable state fund and funding source to support emergency planning and mitigation efforts.

Emergency management is underfunded in Washington State. Furthermore, existing funding for local programs is complex, due to the large number of funding sources that must be managed. Available funding may also fluctuate each year, rendering the process somewhat unpredictable. The majority of jurisdictions participating in this

study report that available funding is inadequate to meet the basic requirements of emergency management. As a result, planning and response efforts are emphasized, and mitigation, training, exercises, and long-term recovery efforts are compromised.

Additionally, local programs rely upon resources at the State Emergency Management Division (EMD) for guidance and technical assistance. With a state staff that is already overwhelmed with the short turn-around and tremendous administrative requirements of homeland security grants, new, stable state-level resources are required.

Considerations: Washington should consider how other states fund emergency management. At least 23 states have separate emergency planning and disaster funds, which are used to pay for emergency planning and mitigation, among other needs. The State of California funds emergency management services predominantly with state general funds. Florida has implemented an insurance surcharge to partially fund local emergency management.

Recommendations for Administrative Action

The following recommendations identify seven specific improvements that can be implemented over a relatively short period of time to enhance the existing statewide system of emergency management. In almost all cases, these recommendations are a direct response to one or more study findings developed from survey results and other study data.

Local emergency managers with more involved elected officials report that their local programs receive higher priority and more stable funding. As a result, they are able to maintain higher levels of preparedness than their counterparts.

6. Develop and market an ongoing training program and curriculum for local elected and appointed officials.

Although many local officials are unaware of their responsibilities during a disaster, those officials who have attended emergency management training in recent years report a greater familiarity with state laws and local ordinances, a better understanding of their local program and its relationship to the statewide structure, and a greater confidence in performing their responsibilities. Local emergency managers with more involved elected and appointed officials report that their local programs receive higher priority and more stable funding. As a result, they are able to maintain higher levels of preparedness than their counterparts. Training for local elected and appointed officials should be consistent, and should include, at a minimum, a review of state laws and local ordinances, strategies for becoming more familiar with their local program, and an overview of disaster command and response structures, and roles and responsibilities before, during, and after a disaster, including incident management and continuity of government.

Considerations: In recent years the Association of Washington Cities (AWC), the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC), and the Washington State Emergency Management Association (WSEMA) have jointly sponsored *Emergency Management 101 for Elected Officials*. Participants report that this educational

program has been very successful. AWC and WSAC also offer to their members a training program for newly elected officials. More than 90 percent of new county officials and a significant number of new city officials attend this training program before taking office. Regardless of its sponsor, any training program or combination of programs must be ongoing to adjust to the constant turnover in local elected officials.

Furthermore, the Statewide Homeland Security Strategic Plan has identified the need for a training program in incident management and continuity of government for state and local elected officials. Wherever possible, these two training efforts should be coordinated.

7. Develop adaptive performance guidelines for local emergency management programs.

In its 2003 report, *Drastically Underfunded, Dangerously Unprepared*, the Independent Task Force on Emergency Responders recommended that Congress require the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services to work with state and local agencies as well as emergency responder professional associations to establish clearly defined standards and guidelines for emergency preparedness. The Strategic Plan of the Washington State Emergency Management Association (WSEMA) includes a goal to develop standards and assessment tools by which local programs can be assessed.

Several accepted standards and guidelines already exist. Perhaps the most broadly used is the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) *Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs*. This guideline also serves as the basis for the Emergency Management Accreditation Process (EMAP), the program accreditation effort being developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA). Whether Washington State adopts this or another guideline or tailors one specifically for this state, standards and guidelines contribute to consistency in disaster mitigation, planning, response, and recovery, as well as in overall statewide preparedness.

Considerations: Existing standards and guidelines are comprehensive and complex, require a great of time for reporting, and establish high expectations for performance. Implementing any guideline requires funding, a future target date, and a plan by which existing local programs are to meet the guideline. Moreover, any successful guideline will be adaptive to unique local needs and situations.

Currently, most local programs would not be able to support the additional costs of training and meeting guidelines.

8. Adopt and implement the Incident Command System (ICS) for disaster response in accordance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

State law already mandates the use of an incident command system. Indeed, 94 percent of city, county, and tribal jurisdictions participating in this study report using an incident command system for disaster response.

Beginning October 1, 2004, state and local programs and organizations are required to adopt the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a condition for federal preparedness assistance. NIMS integrates effective practices in emergency response into a comprehensive national framework for incident management. NIMS establishes standardized incident management processes, protocols and procedures to improve the coordination and cooperation among functional disciplines, between public and private entities, and across the full spectrum of potential natural disasters and human-caused incidents, including domestic terrorism and homeland security-related events.

Considerations: The Washington State Homeland Security Strategic Plan recommends building state and local incident management and team capabilities. It also identifies the need to train elected state and locally elected officials in incident management and continuity of government. Implementing any new incident command system will require training state and local responders, as well as local officials. Wherever possible, these two efforts should be coordinated.

9. Review existing mutual aid agreements and evaluate their ability to effectively support disaster response operations.

The introduction of accredited institutions offering individual credentialing and degree programs in emergency management has motivated local programs in Washington to raise the standard for individual capabilities and performance.

While many local jurisdictions have mutual aid agreements with other state and local response agencies, many jurisdictions do not, and many more have not been reviewed or updated in recent years. Mutual aid agreements are most effective when they clearly identify current expectations, responsibilities, and liabilities.

Considerations: Once local mutual aid agreements have been reviewed and revised, emergency management directors, local officials, and local legal staff must be trained on existing agreements and creating future agreements.

10. Develop and market guidelines for local emergency management directors, including essential functions, roles and responsibilities, desirable qualifications, and minimum training and performance recommendations.

Professional credentialing is not new, even in the emergency response disciplines. Fire protection professionals, for example, have long had training requirements established by state and federal guidelines. Emergency management professionals at the federal level will now be required to meet training guidelines established in the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Furthermore, law enforcement

professionals in Washington must meet training requirements stipulated by Washington state law.

The introduction of accredited institutions offering individual credentialing and degree programs in emergency management has motivated local programs in Washington to raise the standard for individual capabilities and performance. To achieve a consistent statewide level of preparedness, and to offer the same quality of protection to Washington's residents, emergency management personnel need to have consistent training, skills, job elements, and performance guidelines.

Considerations: This supports one of the goals included in the Strategic Plan of the Washington State Emergency Management Association (WSEMA): to promote the professional development of local emergency management directors. This organization should play a central role in defining desirable qualifications and minimum training and performance guidelines for emergency management personnel in Washington.

Implementing any recommended guideline requires funding and a future target date and plan by which existing managers must meet the requirement. The cost of implementation and training must also be considered.

11. Develop or update, and then disseminate sample documents, templates, and guides of necessary emergency management ordinances, plans, agreements, and other helpful resources.

There are excellent resources for local emergency managers and elected officials available through the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD), Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC), Washington State Emergency Management Association (WSEMA), and other related organizations. However, many smaller emergency management programs, which most need these resources, are unaware of their availability or have difficulty finding them.

Considerations: Even the best resource documents will be useless to local programs that struggle with shrinking budgets, juggled priorities, and a lack of full-time staff. This recommendation can be facilitated with designated local liaisons from the EMD as outlined in Recommendation 4.

Disaster preparedness requires not only capable local programs and trained emergency workers, but also a public that is educated about its responsibility.

12. Continue to increase public awareness and participation in emergency preparedness.

The final measure of local emergency management is its readiness to protect lives, preserve property and the environment, and protect public health. Achieving these goals requires not only capable local programs and trained emergency workers, but also a public that is educated about its responsibility when a disaster occurs. Since Citizen Corps began in 2002, nearly 300 Citizen Corps trainers have trained over

6,300 Washington State community members in neighborhood preparedness and all hazards. While these efforts are commendable, only a small percentage of citizens have received the training. Increased effort is needed to reach the majority of Washington's citizens.

Considerations: Only 58 percent of the jurisdictions participating in this study have an emergency preparedness public education program and even fewer have a Public Information Officer. Reaching any public education goal will require not only volunteerism, but also significantly greater public outreach by local emergency management programs.

This recommendation supports one of the goals of the Washington Statewide Homeland Security Strategic Plan: to build the state volunteer citizen capability and capacity.

Pursue legislative changes to codify changes resulting from recommendations in this report.

Recommendations for Legislative Action

13. Review state laws governing emergency management. Pursue revisions to update Washington State Administrative Code and Revised Code of Washington.

Title 118-30 of the Washington Administrative Code and Revised Code of Washington Chapter 38.52 outline much of the process of emergency management in Washington. These two sections of Washington law define local jurisdictions' responsibilities outline the requirements for emergency management funds, workers, organizations, services and plans, and disaster response and recovery. Many of the requirements and processes in current law, however, are unclear, outdated, or no longer the most efficient or effective way to provide emergency management services. State law should be updated to reflect these changes, as well as the significant requirements placed on local agencies and entities by new counter-terrorism and homeland security activities.

Considerations: Any process changes to state law should be considered only after a comprehensive review of the relevant administrative and revised codes of Washington, and should be pursued together with any legislative changes resulting from Recommendation 14.

14. Pursue the necessary legislative revisions to codify organizational and other changes resulting from recommendations in this report.

The Task Force anticipates that the first five recommendations for systemic change in this report will dramatically restructure the system of emergency management in Washington. Such restructuring will require codifying these changes in state law to legally establish new and newly aligned emergency management regional boundaries, sub-regional operational areas, and a stable, long-term funding source.

Considerations: These legislative changes should be pursued together with any legislative revisions resulting from Recommendation 13.

Immediate Next Steps

15. Gain approval and endorsement for the recommendations included in this report from the Washington State Emergency Management Council, the Adjutant General, and the Governor's Office.
16. Continue the Task Force on Local Programs to oversee the implementation of the recommendations adopted or endorsed by the Washington State Emergency Management Council, the Adjutant General, and the Governor's Office.
17. Prioritize implementation projects and develop detailed work plans. Identify and develop necessary work groups to guide and manage implementation.
18. Report bi-monthly on progress to the Washington State Emergency Management Council.

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